

## COUPON CONTEST.

To the Most Popular Student at the Florida State College, this city, we will give \$10 in gold to spend as he or she likes during the holiday recess.

Cut votes out near the border line; write name and address plainly and send in as directed on ballot. Please do not roll ballots. Fold smoothly if necessary, so they can be handled easily.

## Most Popular Student

AT THE FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE.

As the most Popular Student at the Florida State College, Tallahassee, I vote for

10-4-1901 Of

Write name and address of the person you vote for plainly on dotted lines and hand in or mail at once to "Coupon Contest Editor Tallahasseean, Tallahassee, Fla." Not more than 10 votes of same date will be received from one person.

## Ten Nights in a Bar Room.

## NIGHT THE FIRST.

## THE "SICKLE AND SHEAF."

"Who is this Green?" I asked of Lyon, finding myself alone with him in the barroom, soon after.

"A black-leg, I take it," was his hesitating answer.

"Does Judge Lyman suspect his real character?"

"I don't know anything about that, but I wouldn't be afraid to bet ten dollars, that if you could look upon them now, you would find cards in their hands."

"What a school, and what teachers for the youth who just went with them!" I could not help remarking.

"Willy Hammond?"

"Yes."

"You may well say that. What care his father be thinking about to leave him exposed to such influences?"

"He is one of the few who are in raptures about this tavern, because its erection has slightly increased the value of his property about here; but, if he is not the loser of fifty per cent. for every one gained, before ten years go by, I'm very much in error."

"How so?"

"It will prove, I fear, the open door to ruin for his son."

"That's bad," said I.

"Bad! It is awful to think of. There is not a finer young man in the country; nor one with better mind and heart than Willy Hammond. So much the sinner will be his destruction. Ah, sir! this tavern-keeping is a curse to any place."

"But, I thought, just now, that you spoke in favor of letting even the poor drunkard's money go into our landlord's till, in order to encourage his commendable enterprise in opening so good a tavern."

"We all speak with covert irony sometimes," answered the man, "as I did then. Poor Joe Morgan! He is an old and early friend of Simon Slade. They were boys together, and worked as millers under the same roof for many years. In fact, Joe's father owned the mill, and the two learned their trade with him. When old Morgan died, the mill came into Joe's hands. It was in rather a worn-out condition, and Joe went into debt for some pretty thorough repairs and additions of machinery. By-and-by, Simon Slade, who was hired by Joe to run the mill, received a couple of thousand dollars at the death of an aunt. This sum enabled him to buy a share in the mill, which Morgan was very glad to sell in order to get clear of debt. Time passed on, and Joe left his milling interests almost entirely in the hands of Slade, who, it must be said in his favor, did not neglect the business. But it somehow happened—I will not say unfairly—that, at the end of ten years, Joe Morgan no longer owned a share in the mill. The whole property was in the hands of Slade. People did not wonder at this; for while Slade was always to be found at the mill, industrious, active and attentive to customers, Morgan was rarely seen on the premises. You would often find him in the woods, with a gun over his shoulder, or sitting by a trout brook, or lounging at the tavern. And yet every body liked Joe; for he was companionable, quick-witted, and very kind-hearted. He would say sharp things, sometimes, when people manifested little meanness; but there was so much honey in the gall, that bitterness rarely predominated.

"A year or two before his ownership in the mill ceased, Morgan married one of the sweetest girls in our town—Fanny Ellis, that was her name, and she could have had her pick of the young men. Everybody affected to wonder at her choice; and yet nobody really did wonder, for Joe was an attractive young man, take him as you would, and just the one to win the heart of a girl like Fanny. What if he had been seen, now and then, a little the worse for drink? What if he showed more fondness for pleasure than for business? Fanny did not look into the future with doubt and fear.

"The man, warming with his theme, had spoken with an eloquence I had not expected from his lips. Slightly over-mastered by his feelings, he paused for a moment or two, and then he added—

"It was unfortunate for Joe, at least, that Slade sold his mill and became a tavern-keeper; for Joe had a sure berth, and wages regularly paid. He didn't always stick to his work; but would go off on a spree now and then; but Slade bore with all this, and worked harder himself to make up for his hand's shortcoming. And no matter what deficiency the little store-room at home might show, Fanny Morgan never found her meal-barrel empty without knowing where to get it replenished.

"But, after Slade sold his mill, a sad change took place. The new owner was little disposed to pay wages to a hand who would not give him all his time during working hours; and in less than two weeks from the day he took possession, Morgan was discharged. Since then he has been working about at odd jobs, earning scarcely enough to buy the liquor it requires to feed the inordinate thirst that is consuming him. I am not disposed to blame Simon Slade for the wrong-doing of Morgan; but here is a simple fact in the case—if he had kept on at the useful calling of a miller, he would have saved this man's family from want, suffering, and a lower deep of misery than that into which they have already fallen. I merely state it, and you can draw your own conclusion. It is one of the many facts, on the other side of this tavern question, which it will do no harm to mention. I have noted a good many facts besides, and one is, that before Slade opened the 'Sickle and Sheaf,' he did all in his power to save his early friend from the curse of intemperance; now he has become his tempter. Heretofore, it was his hand that provided the means for his family to live in some small degree of comfort; now he takes the poor pittance the wretched man earns, and dropping it into his till, forgets the wife and children at home, who are hungry for the bread this money should have purchased.

"Joe Morgan, fallen as he is, sir, is no fool. His mind sees quickly yet; and he rarely utters a sentiment that is not full of meaning. When he spoke of Slade's heart growing as hard in ten years as his millstones, he was not uttering words at random, nor merely indulging in a harsh sentiment, little caring whether it were closely applicable or not. That the indurating process has begun, he alas! was too sadly conscious."

"The landlord had been absent from the room for some time. He left soon after Judge Lyman, Harvey Green and Willy Hammond withdrew, and I did not see him again during the evening. His son Frank was left to attend at the bar; no very hard task, for not more than half a dozen called in to drink from the time Morgan left until the bar was closed.

"While Lyon was giving me the brief history just recorded, I noticed a little incident that caused a troubled feeling to pervade my mind. After a man, for whom the landlord's son had prepared a fancy drink, had nearly emptied his glass, he set it down upon the counter and went out. A table-spoonful or two remained in the glass, and I noticed Frank, after smelling at it two or three times, put the glass to his lips and sip the sweetened liquor. The flavor proved agreeable; for after tasting it, he raised the glass again and drained every drop.

"Frank!" I heard a low voice, in a warning tone, pronounce the name, and glancing towards a door partly opened, that led from the inside of the bar to the yard, I saw the face of Mrs. Slade. It had the same troubled expression I had noticed before, but now blended with more of anxiety.

"The boy went out at the call of his mother; and when a new customer entered, I noticed that Flora, the daughter, came in to wait upon him. I noticed, too, that while she poured out the liquor, there was a heightened color on her face, in which I fancied that I saw a tinge of shame. It is certain that she was not in the least gracious to the person on whom she was waiting; and that there was little heart in her manner of performing the task.

"Ten o'clock found me alone and musing in the bar room over the occurrences of the evening. Of all the incidents, that of the entrance of Joe Morgan's child kept the most prominent place in my thoughts. The picture of that mournful little face was ever before me; and I seemed all the while to hear the word 'Father,' uttered so touchingly, and yet with such a world of childish tenderness. And the man,

who would have opposed the most stubborn resistance to his fellow-men, had they sought to force him from the room, going passively, almost meekly out, led by that little child—I could not, for a time, turn my thoughts from the image thereof! And then thought bore me to the wretched home, back to which the gentle, loving child had taken her father, and my heart grew faint in me as indignation busied itself with all the misery there.

"And Willy Hammond. The little that I had heard and seen of him greatly interested me in his favor. Ah! upon what dangerous ground was he treading. How many pit-falls awaited his feet—how near they were to the brink of a fearful precipice, down which to fall was certain destruction! How beautiful had been his life—promise! Alas! the clouds were gathering already, and the low rumble of the distant thunder presaged the coming of a fearful tempest. Was there none to warn him of the danger? Alas! all might now come too late, for so few who enter the path in which his steps were treading will hearken to friendly counsel, or heed the solemn warning. Where was he now? This question recurred over and over again. He had left the bar-room with Judge Lyman and Green early in the evening, and had not made his appearance since. Who and what was Green? And Judge Lyman, was he a man of principle. One with whom it was safe to trust a youth like Willy Hammond?

"While I mused thus, the bar-room door opened, and a man past the prime of life, with a somewhat florid face, which gave a strong relief to the gray, almost white hair that, suffered to grow freely, was pushed back, and lay in heavy masses on his coat collar, entered with a hasty step. He was almost venerable in appearance; yet, there was in his dark, quick eyes the brightness of unquenched loves, the fires of which were kindled at the altars of selfishness and sensuality. This I saw at a glance. There was a look of concern on his face, as he threw his eyes around the bar-room; and he seemed disappointed, I thought, at finding it empty.

"Is Simon Slade here?"

"As I answered in the negative, Mrs. Slade entered through the door that opened from the yard, and stood behind the counter.

"Ah, Mrs. Slade! Good evening, ma'am," he said.

"Good evening, Judge Hammond."

"Is your husband at home?"

"I believe he is," answered Mrs. Slade. "I think he's somewhere about the house."

"Ask him to step here, will you?"

"Mrs. Slade went out. Nearly five minutes went by, during which time Judge Hammond paced the floor of the bar uneasily. Then the landlord made his appearance. The free, open, manly and self-satisfied expression of his countenance, which I had remarked on alighting from the stage in the afternoon, was gone. I noticed at once the change, for it was striking. He did not look steadily into the face of Judge Hammond, who asked him in a low voice, if his son had been in during the evening.

"He was here," said Slade.

"When?"

"He came in some time after dark and stayed, maybe, an hour."

"And hasn't been here since?"

"It's nearly two hours since he left the bar-room," replied the landlord.

Judge Hammond seemed perplexed. There was a degree of evasion in Slade's manner that he could hardly help noticing. To me it was all apparent, for I had lively suspicions that made my observation acute.

Judge Hammond crossed his arms behind him, and took three or four strides about the floor.

"Was Judge Lyman here tonight?"

"He was," answered Slade.

"Did he and Willy go out together?"

The question seemed an unexpected one for the landlord. Slade appeared slightly confused, and did not answer promptly.

"I—I rather think they did," he said, after a brief hesitation.

"Ah, well! Perhaps he is at Judge Lyman's. I will call over there."

And Judge Hammond left the bar-room.

"Would you like to retire, sir?"

said the landlord, now turning to me, with a forced smile—I saw that it was forced.

"If you please," I answered.

He lit a candle and conducted me to my room, where, overwearied with the day's exertion, I soon fell asleep, and did not awaken until the sun was shining brightly into my windows.

I remained at the village a portion of the day, but saw nothing of the parties in whom the incidents of the previous evening had awakened a lively interest. At four o'clock I left in the stage, and did not visit Carrabelle again for a year.

## NIGHT THE SECOND.

## THE CHANGES OF A YEAR.

A cordial grasp of the hand and a few words of hearty welcome greeted me as I alighted from the stage at the 'Sickle and Sheaf,' on my next visit to Carrabelle. At the first glance, I saw no change in the countenance, manner, or general bearing of Simon Slade, the landlord. With him, the year seemed to have passed like a pleasant summer day. His face was round, and full, and rosy, and his eyes sparkled with the good-humor which flows from intense self-satisfaction. Everything about him seemed to say—

"All right with myself and the world."

I had scarcely expected this. From what I saw during my last brief sojourn at the 'Sickle and Sheaf,' the inference was natural, that elements had been called into activity which must produce changes adverse to those pleasant states of mind that threw an almost perpetual sunshine over the landlord's countenance. How many hundred times had I thought of Joe Morgan and Willy Hammond—of Frank, and the temptations to which a bar-room exposed him. The heart of Slade must, indeed, be as hard as one of his old millstones, if he could remain an unmoved witness of the corruption and degradation of these.

"My fears have outrun the actual progress of things," said I to myself, with a sense of relief, as I mused alone in the still neatly arranged sitting-room, after the landlord, who sat and chatted for a few moments, had left me. "There is, I am willing to believe, a basis of good in this man's

character, which has led him to remove as far as possible the more palpable evils that ever attach themselves to a house of public entertainment. He had but entered on the business last year. There was much to be learned, pondered, and corrected. Experience, I doubt not, has led to many important changes in the manner of conducting the establishment, and especially in what pertains to the bar."

As I thought thus, my eyes glanced through the half open door, and rested on the face of Simon Slade. He was standing behind the bar—evidently all alone in the room—with his head bent in a musing attitude. At first I was in some doubt as to the identity of the singularly changed countenance. Two deep perpendicular seams lay sharply defined on his forehead—the arch of his eyebrows was gone, and from each corner of his compressed lips, lines were seen reaching half way to the chin. Blending with slightly troubled expression, was a strongly marked selfishness, evidently brooding over the consummation of its purpose. For some moments I sat gazing on his face, half doubting at times if it were really that of Simon Slade. Suddenly, a gleam flashed over—an ejaculation was uttered, and one clenched hand was brought down, with a sharp stroke, into the open palm of the other. The landlord's mind had reached a conclusion, and was resolved upon action. There were no warm rays in the gleam of light that irradiated his countenance—at least none for my heart, which felt under them an almost icy coldness.

"Just the man I was thinking about," I heard the landlord say, as some one entered the bar, while his whole manner underwent a sudden change.

"The old saying is true," was answered in a voice, the tones of which were familiar to my ears.

"Thinking of the old Harry?" said Slade.

"Yes."

"True, literally, in the present case," I heard the landlord remark, though in a much lower tone; "for, if you are not the devil himself, you can't be farther removed than a second cousin."

A low, gurgling laugh met his little sally. There was something in it unlike a human laugh, that it caused my

blood to trickle, for a moment, coldly along my veins.

I heard nothing more except the murmur of voices in the bar, for a hand shut the partly-opened door that led from the sitting-room.

Whose was that voice? I recalled its tones, and tried to fix in my thought the person to whom it belonged, but was unable to do so. I was not very long in doubt, for on stepping out upon the porch in front of the tavern, the well-remembered face of Harvey Green presented itself. He stood in the bar-room door, and was talking earnestly to Slade, whose back was towards me. I saw that he recognized me, although I had not passed a word with him on the occasion of my former visit; and there was a lighting up of his countenance as if about to speak—but I withdrew my eyes from his face to avoid the unwelcome greeting. When I looked at him again, I saw that he was regarding me with a sinister glance, which was instantly withdrawn. In what broad, black characters was the word "tempter" written on his face! How was it possible for any one to look thereon, and not read the warning inscription!

Soon after, he withdrew into the bar room, and the landlord came and took a seat near me on the porch.

"How is the 'Sickle and Sheaf' coming?" I inquired.

"First rate," was the answer—"First rate."

"As well as you expected?"

"Better."

"Satisfied with your experiment?"

"Perfectly. Couldn't get me back to the rumbling old mill again, if you were to make me a present of it."

"What of the mill?" I asked. "How does the new owner come on?"

"About as I thought it would be."

"Not doing very well?"

"How could it be expected, when he didn't know enough of the milling business to grind a bushel of wheat right. He lost half of the custom I transferred to him, in less than three months. Then he broke his main shaft, and it took over three weeks to get in a new one. Half of his remaining customers discovered by this time that they could get far better mill from their grain at Harwood's mill near Lynnwood, and so did not care to trouble him any more. The upshot of the whole matter is, he broke down next and had to sell the mill at a heavy loss."

"Who has it now?"

"Judge Hammond is the purchaser."

"He is going to rent it, I suppose?"

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